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FM THE WHITE HOUSE TOHAK 97

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WH29844 SECTION ONE OF TWO

TOHAK 97

DECEMBER 8, 1972

MORI PER  
C05079899

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT:

ARMY review completed

SITUATION IN VIETNAM

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS  
APPLY

BOTH MARINE AND AIRBORNE FORWARD ELEMENTS WERE HIT WITH STRONG  
ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE YESTERDAY, BUT AIRBORNE UNITS ARE SHOWING  
MORE AGGRESSIVENESS AS THEY ATTACK TO THE WEST.

THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT ELEMENTS OF THE NVA 711TH DIVISION MAY  
HAVE DEPLOYED OUT OF THEIR MOUNTAIN BASE AREAS IN QUANG NAM  
PROVINCE INTO THE QUE SON VALLEY. THE GVN HAS AN INFANTRY  
REGIMENT, A RANGER BATTALION, AND TERRITORIAL FORCES IN THE  
AREA TO COUNTER THE ENEMY THREAT.

BEING SUPPLEMENTED AND REPOSITIONED AS THE CORPS COMMANDER CONTINUES HIS EFFORT TO EXPAND GVN CONTROL IN THAT AREA. SOUTHWEST OF DUC CO, THE 22ND RECON COMPANY WAS FORCED TO EVACUATE ITS POSITION FOLLOWING AN ENEMY ATTACK. THE UNIT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EXTRACTED FROM THE AREA.

ENEMY-INITIATED ACTIVITY IN MILITARY REGION 3 CONTINUED AT A SLIGHTLY INCREASED LEVEL. IN BINH TUY PROVINCE, AN ENEMY COMPANY ENTERED A HAMLET AND ENGAGED TERRITORIAL FORCES. AFTER A FIVE-HOUR BATTLE, THE HAMLET WAS CLEARED OF ENEMY TROOPS.

THE OVERALL LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN MILITARY REGION 4 REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME WITH CONCENTRATIONS OF ENEMY ACTIVITY SHIFTING TO THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS AREA OF CHAU DOC PROVINCE.

TODAY, 333 U.S. TACTICAL AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN, 51 OF WHICH HIT TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM. IN ADDITION, 30 B-52 STRIKES WERE FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM.

#### MILITARY REGION 1

IN NORTHERN MILITARY REGION 1, ENEMY FORCES ARE USING INDIRECT FIRE  
WP1 - 57334 -8, 5313, 18; 5-158.

AS THEIR MAIN DEFENSIVE TACTIC.

-- YESTERDAY, SOUTH VIETNAMESE MARINE POSITIONS NORTHEAST OF QUANG TRI CITY EXPERIENCED AN INCREASE IN NVA INDIRECT FIRE. MARINE ELEMENTS WEST OF THE VINH DINH CANAL REPULSED AN ENEMY ATTACK, BUT GROUND FIGHTING GENERALLY REMAINED AT A LOW LEVEL IN THE MARINE AREA.

-- ELEMENTS OF THE 1ST AIRBORNE BRIGADE NEAR THE THACH HAN RIVER MADE GOOD PROGRESS YESTERDAY DESPITE AN INCREASE IN ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE.

THE 7TH RANGER GROUP AT FIRE SUPPORT BASE BARBARA CONTINUED TO EXPAND THEIR AREA OF OPERATION.

## MILITARY REGION 2

SOUTHWEST OF VO DINH, A BATTALION OF THE ARVN 53RD REGIMENT CONTINUED TO OPERATE WITH NO CONTACT REPORTED. THERE IS NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE TWO BATTALIONS OF THE ARVN 44TH REGIMENT WHICH WITHDREW IN SOME DISORDER FROM POSITIONS NEAR VO DINH. AN ESTIMATED 200 MEN ARE STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR.

-- FOLLOWING A VISIT BY THE II CORPS COMMANDER TO THE TACTICAL COMMAND POST AT THANH AN YESTERDAY, FOUR 175-MM GUNS WERE MOVED TO THE AREA AND FOUR 155-MM HOWITZERS WERE MOVED TO THE FIRE SUPPORT BASE WEST OF THANH GIAO. ADDITIONALLY, A RANGER BATTALION WAS MOVED TO A LOCATION 2 KILOMETERS WEST OF THANH GIAO AND A CAVALRY SQUADRON WAS MOVED TO THANH GIAO AS REINFORCEMENTS.

-- TERRITORIAL FORCES REPORTED FAVORABLE RESULTS FROM CONTACTS IN BINH DINH AND BINH THUAN PROVINCES. THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN ENEMY ACTIVITY RECENTLY IN BINH THUAN PROVINCE.

## MILITARY REG ON 3

SCATTERED INDIRECT FIRE AND ISOLATED GROUND ATTACKS ACCOUNTED FOR MOST OF THE SLIGHTLY INCREASED LEVEL OF ENEMY ACTIVITY YESTERDAY.

-- GVN OPERATIONS CONTINUE IN THE AREA OF ROCKET LAUNCH

SITES NORTH OF SAIGON. A SECOND ARVN BATTALION WAS DEPLOYED TO THAT AREA LATE YESTERDAY, AND A TWO-BATTALION OPERATION IS BEING CONDUCTED SOUTHEAST OF LAI THIEU TODAY.

#### MILITARY REGION 4

GOVERNMENT FORCES IN THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS AREA OF CHAU DOC PROVINCE RECEIVED NINE INDIRECT FIRE ATTACKS YESTERDAY WHICH CAUSED MODERATE CASUALTIES.

-- IN PHONG DINH PROVINCE, TWO RURAL FORCE COMPANIES HAVE BEEN IN SPORADIC CONTACT FOR TWO DAYS WITH AN ESTIMATED 100 ENEMY TROOPS. A BATTALION OF THE ARVN 21ST DIVISION WAS AIRLIFTED INTO AN AREA NEAR THE CONTACT LATE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. CASUALTIES IN THE FIGHTING THUS FAR HAVE BEEN MODERATE.

-- THE OPERATION TO CLEAR THE MARKET PLACE IN KIEN GIANG PROVINCE, WHICH WAS OCCUPIED BY AN ENEMY FORCE YESTERDAY, IS PROGRESSING SLOWLY AS A RURAL FORCE BATTALION IS MEETING ENEMY RESISTANCE.

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WR29844 FINAL SECTION OF TWO

U.S. AIR AND NAVAL ACTIVITY

THE FOLLOWING AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN TODAY:

	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	NVN	TOTAL
TACAIR U.S.	112	39	59	72	51	333
TACAIR VNAF	4	53	55	37	0	149
B-52	54	6	6	2	30	104

THERE WERE 3 SORTIES OVER CAMBODIA AND 3 IN LAOS.

YESTERDAY THE FOLLOWING U.S. TACTICAL AIR STRIKES WERE FLOWN  
OVER NORTH VIETNAM:

RP-1	RP-2	RP-3	RP-4	RP-5	RP-6A	RP-6B	OFFSHORE	TOTAL
41	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	51

THERE WERE NO SORTIES FLOWN NORTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL.

## TACTICAL AIR OPERATIONS

USAF, USMC, AND USN TACTICAL AIRCRAFT FLEW 51 SORTIES. USAF F-111 AIRCRAFT FLYING NIGHT MISSIONS STRUCK TARGETS IN THE LOWER PANHANDLE THAT INCLUDED INTERDICTION POINTS, TRUCK PARKS, AND A POL STORAGE AREA. STRIKE RESULTS WERE NOT OBSERVED. NAVY AIRCRAFT STRUCK POL STORAGE AREAS, SUPPLY STORAGE AREAS, AND TRANSHIPMENT POINTS IN THE CENTRAL PANHANDLE. WEATHER PRECLUDED THE OBSERVATION OF RESULTS. USAF, USMC, AND USN AIRCRAFT STRUCK INTERDICTION POINTS AND TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY AND DESTROYED OR DAMAGED THREE TRUCKS. AIRCREWS ALSO REPORTED THREE SUSTAINED FIRES. USAF TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT FLEW TWO SORTIES OVER NORTH VIETNAM

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TANKER TRAM GIANG MAY HAVE DEPARTED HAIPHONG HARBOR. SHE IS A CONVERTED LST WITH A LIGHT-LOAD DRAFT OF ABOUT 10 FEET AND COULD HAVE LEFT DURING HIGH TIDE, THUS AVOIDING THE MINEFIELDS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE MERCHANTMAN VIET BAO IS PREPARING TO DEPART. VIET BAO HAS A LIGHT-LOAD DRAFT OF ABOUT 15 FEET AND MAY ALSO EXIT DURING HIGH TIDE WITHOUT USING THE SHIP CHANNEL. TRAM GIANG'S DEPARTURE WOULD BRING TO THREE THE NUMBER OF SMALL NORTH VIETNAMESE SHIPS KNOWN TO HAVE LEFT HAIPHONG HARBOR RECENTLY.

RAIL REPAIR: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF DECEMBER 2 SHOWS THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE NOW COMPLETED WORK ON THE RAIL BYPASS BRIDGE OVER THE RED RIVER AT HANOI. CONSTRUCTION OF THIS BRIDGE, A COMBINATION OF FIXED SPANS AND PONTOON SECTIONS, BEGAN IN EARLY NOVEMBER, SHORTLY AFTER THE PARTIAL U.S. BOMBING HALT. THE NEWLY COMPLETED STRUCTURE REPLACES A SMALL-CAPACITY RAIL FERRY, AND IT TOO IS A TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT FOR THE HEAVILY DAMAGED PAUL DOUMER BRIDGE.

VEHICLES IN RECENT MONTHS JUST NORTHEAST OF HANOI. MORE THAN 450 VEHICLES WERE BACKED UP ON ROADS LEADING TO VARIOUS BRIDGES AND BYPASSES. THIS TRAFFIC CORROBORATES OTHER INDICATIONS OF HEAVY SHIPMENTS THROUGH THIS AREA.

#### CAMBODIA

ROUTE 4 BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND THE PORT OF KOMPONG SOM IS CLOSED AGAIN, AFTER KHMER COMMUNISTS OCCUPIED A SHORT SEGMENT OF THE HIGHWAY ABOUT TEN MILES SOUTHWEST OF THE TOWN OF KOMPONG SPEU ON DECEMBER 6. ALL TRAFFIC HAS BEEN SUSPENDED PENDING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO CLEAR THE HIGH-GROUND POSITIONS OVERLOOKING THE ROAD. IN PHNOM PENH, COMMUNIST FROGMEN USING AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE HEAVILY DAMAGED A CARGO SHIP ON DECEMBER 7 AND CAUSED SEVERAL CASUALTIES. THE SHIP SANK, BUT IT IS NOT EXPECTED TO HAMPER OTHER SHIPPING.

#### LAOS

IRREGULAR UNITS MOVED INTO PAKSONG ON THE BOLOVENS PLATEAU ON DECEMBER 5 AND QUICKLY SECURED IT AGAINST LIGHT ENEMY RESISTANCE. THESE FORCES PRESUMABLY WILL SOON ATTEMPT TO LINK UP WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT BATTALIONS THAT HAVE BEGUN TO ADVANCE ALONG ROUTE 23. PAKSONG, AN IMPORTANT ROAD JUNCTION, <sup>WAS THE COMMERCIAL CENTER</sup> 12-5#3 :9..34:8-) :3,534 FOR THE BOLOVENS AREA UNTIL IT WAS FIRST CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS IN MAY 1971. THE GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE A STRONG EFFORT TO HOLD IT IS EXPECTATION OF A CEASE-FIRE.

IN THE CENTRAL PANHANDLE, GOVERNMENT TROOPS ARE STILL TRYING TO OUST SMALL ENEMY UNITS FROM BUNKERS IN MUONG PHALANE. OTHER IRREGULAR TROOPS ATTEMPTING TO CLEAR HAMLETS IN THE SURROUNDING AREA CLASHED SHARPLY WITH ELEMENTS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE 29TH INDEPENDENT REGIMENT.

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